

Wyoming Department of Agriculture

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The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.



Dave Freudenthal, Governor
John Eachus, Director

October 5, 2007

Wyoming Game and Fish Department
5400 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82006

Dear Wyoming Game and Fish:

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) on the Wyoming Revised Wolf Management Plan dated September 2007.

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposal has major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources and the welfare of our citizens, it's important that we be kept informed of proposed actions and decisions and that we continue to be provided the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

We are encouraged to see progress towards a final and approved Wyoming Wolf Management Plan (Plan) and ultimately the delisting of the wolf in the Northern Rocky Mountains. We support Governor Freudenthal and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) in their efforts to amend the Plan, which meets both the needs of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the citizens of Wyoming. We offer the following comments in support of the Plan to delist the gray wolf and to move forward with state wolf management.

We understand and accept the final decision by Governor Freudenthal to extend the trophy game management boundary as proposed. We believe the boundary is more than adequate for maintaining a viable wolf population to the meet requirement of fifteen breeding pairs as defined. While it is discouraging to know a larger number of livestock producers will experience depredation in this designated area and they will have to prove their animals were killed by wolves in order to receive compensation, we continue to believe the positives of delisting and state management will outweigh the negatives.

We strongly encourage the WGFD to continue their efforts to pursue outside funding for wolf management and compensation to producers for livestock losses due to wolves. The number of non-Wyoming citizens and organizations who supported wolf reintroduction should financially support the management of wolves and not rely solely on the WGFD, hunters, or livestock producers to foot the bill.

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The WDA thanks the WGFD for the opportunity to comment. We want to reiterate our support to delist the wolves and move to state management in Wyoming and the Northern Rocky Mountain Region. We encourage the state to continue to work with the Service in order to delist the wolves in a timely manner and according to the requirements set forth in House Bill 213.

Sincerely,



John Etchepare
Director

JE/jw

Cc: Governor's Planning Office
WDA Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming State Grazing Board